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SUBJECT: ECOSOC TERMINATES COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
VOTES ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES SEGMENT THEME

REF: USUN 547

1.(U) Summary: The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) met March 22 to formally terminate the operations of the UN Commission on Human Rights, preceded by brief informal consultations on a range of topics, including the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition, ECOSOC adopted a decision on the theme for the ECOSOC Operational Activities segment by a vote of 51-1(US)-0. End Summary.

CHR Abolition

2.(U) On March 22, ECOSOC took formal action abolishing the Commission on Human Rights by June 16 after extensive discussions on the draft resolution, "Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 60/251," as called for by operative paragraph 13 (OP 13) of the March 15 General Assembly resolution establishing the new Human Rights Council (60/251). Mexico called for the adoption of and transmission to ECOSOC of two outstanding mandates -- the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP) and the Draft Convention on Forced Disappearances. Pakistan and others called for a 1-day final session which would be "short and procedural," and not substantive, to abolish the CHR. Mexico, supported by Argentina and Brazil, argued for a more extensive final session of the CHR, pointing out there was no agreed procedure and agenda for a one-day session. In addition, since the two issues previously mentioned were close to adoption, CHR should be given the chance for submitting them to ECOSOC, as opposed to transferring them to HRC where they might be subjected to a vote.

3.(U) ECOSOC Pres. Hachani responded that it is not ECOSOC's responsibility to interpret the substance of 60/251, but to discharge ECOSOC's duties as set out in OP 13; therefore, it is necessary to abolish the Commission by June 16 and leave possible substantive issues for a later date. Pakistan agreed with this and again suggested a one-day session. A number of African nations, including Benin, Guinea-Bissau, and Nigeria, stated they would like the CHR abolished quickly and that substantive issues such as indigenous peoples should not be discussed in this forum at the present moment. Responding to a concern raised by Benin on procedures for handling the CHR's final report, Hachani said it would be handled like all other reports, and would be received, considered, and followed-up on if needed. Hachani and others rejected the idea raised by Benin that CHR should present a historical overview of its 60 years of work.

4.(U) Tanzania's representative agreed with Hachani and said the Commission might need a few days to conclude a final report. President Hachani reminded the Council a decision was

needed at this session because ECOSOC could not meet March 23, and a decision March 24 would not leave Geneva time to carry-out ECOSOC's request. The President stated his preference for Tanzania's suggestion for a few days of "short and procedural" work for the Commission to conclude its session and submit a final report, thereby leaving substantive issues for a later date and time. Hachani promptly moved to the formal meeting, where the decision to abolish the CHR was adopted by consensus. (Comment: The two substantive issues of interest to Latin countries, indigenous peoples and forced disappearances, still need to be discussed, either in Geneva or when ECOSOC receives CHR's report.)

Fifth Meeting of the Organizational Session

5.(U) The formal meeting, in addition to terminating the Commission on Human Rights (see above), elected by acclamation H.E. Mr. Dalius Cekuolis (Lithuania) as Vice-President of the Council to replace his predecessor who had departed New York for Vilnius. The meeting then moved to the Operational Activities Segment for the 2006 summer session, draft decision E/2006/L.3, which will deal with the modalities and funding of UN operations. Both the EU and the G77 stated their support for the G77 draft decision, which the Council adopted by a 51-1(US)-0 vote. USDel gave an EOY highlighting that the decision does not "mention or acknowledge in any way whatsoever the (World) Summit Outcome," and that ECOSOC has shirked "...its responsibilities to implement the reform process of the Summit Outcome."

Peacebuilding Commission

6.(U) In the informal session, President Hachani raised the lack of progress on ECOSOC election procedures for the PBC Organizational Committee (OC) and his intent to move toward a solution in the following week. (Note: he has scheduled another formal meeting for March 31.) Several delegations then shared their views on the need for strong regional representation in the PBC, notably, Brazil, Mexico and India. The Indian presentation noted the urgent need to get the PBC operational quickly, but said that some groups needed to adjust their policies so that the stand up of the PBC would not be "grossly unfair." President Hachani noted that he would be working with PGA Eliasson to develop a solution quickly.

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